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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the problem of secondary school students who have difficulties in making early educational decisions which influence their college plans. The need to teach the vocabulary of college admissions to both parents and students, beginning in the elementary school, is emphasized. It is noted that the technical vocabulary of standardized testing used in parent conferences and in presentations and written material to parents may not be understood by the parents. Examples from college admissions materials and standardized test materials are used to illustrate the technicality of the language used. Vocabulary used in the college admissions process is presented as a technical vocabulary not taught in the classroom. The paper asserts that knowledge of this vocabulary would: (1) enable parents and students to make decisions early in the child's education; (2) allow students to face less pressure and receive more parent support; and (3) prepare parents and students to take more decision making responsibility for college plans. Paper copies of overhead slides used to illustrate points made in the paper are included. (NB)

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PANEL 28

National Association of College Admissions Counselors

Washington, D.C.

October 6, 1986

Topic:

Reasons Why The Technical Vocabulary Of College Admissions Should Be Taught To Parents and Students Beginning In Elementary School

A Research Project by

Sally Shoemaker

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Maitland, Florida

CG 019682

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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Good Morning. My name is Sally Shoemaker. I would like to talk to you about the Period of Enlightenment. I could be speaking about the period beginning in the 1600's when philosophers emphasized the use of reason as the best method of learning truth. A period when the thinkers of this Age of Reason formulated ideals of human dignity and worth. During this period philosophers theorized that men do not always plan ahead but often act on impulse. They attributed this to inadequate education.

Actually, I wish to move forward to my own period of enlightenment, a period which covers fifteen years as a guidance counselor. For purposes of this presentation, I wish to focus specifically on the last two years. I am currently assigned to Maitland Junior High School, and my specific duties are to serve as counselor to the entire ninth grade, the majority of the eighth grade, and to all of our highly gifted students who, as AAIM students, take courses at multi-grade levels.
The majority of my counseling experiences have occurred in senior high schools. I had never been in a junior high school prior to going to Maitland. As a senior counselor, I used to wonder what happened to ninth graders for they had made some poor academic decisions very early in their young lives.

Two events, I believe, have helped me to understand to a greater extent why students have such difficulties in making early educational decisions which influence their college plans. My first period of enlightenment came about as a result of a classroom experience at my school. When the Florida legislature enacted the RAISE Bill, our students were confronted with a multitude of educational changes. Curriculum choices changed, credit requirements changed, and the plethora of registration instructions changed. In order to assist our ninth grade students, or so we thought, we went into the classroom to teach the new requirements. We took three days to do it and we used a full fifty minute period. We didn't speak off the cuff; we were well prepared with facts, hand-outs, overheads, and advice. Students were asked to take notes, and the students in my section were told that they would be given a quiz at the end of the presentation. My expectations were

that the students would be able to score very well on the ten-question, true-false quiz that I would give them. 1. (Overhead) The results was overwhelming. Ninety per-cent of my students failed the quiz. In discussing the results with my principal, I made the point that I felt that the students were confronted with a huge overload of information.

The second event in which I participated helped me to realize that the problem should have been identified specifically as VOCABULARY OVERLOAD! Although my undergraduate degree is in English, I believe that I had forgotten how important vocabulary knowledge and reading skills are to communication. Perhaps I was just taking these skills for granted. Perhaps I have been focusing too much on the verbal parts of communication for counselors are verbal presenters. In order to renew my Florida Teachers' Certificate, I had to complete an in-service course called RICA, 2. Reading in the Content Area. I approached this course with less than enthusiasm for I was working two jobs, and I felt that it simply meant more work, busy work. It only took a few minutes for teacher, Mary Jane Sevick, to convince me that I was about to experience my second period of enlightenment. Her well prepared presentations convinced me that vocabulary plays a tremendous role in the student's ability to follow directions, to make plans and to set goals. It was obvious that I should be using the skills that she was teaching to improve my communication with students in guidance. Her program wasn't just for the classroom teacher. Reading, and specifically vocabulary knowledge, played a great role in my work also. I came away from the course thoroughly convinced that the vocabulary of college admissons should be taught to both parents and students, beginning in elementary school.

(overhead)

Let me give you four or five examples to prove my point.

As a result of the RICA course, I asked myself another question. If students were suffering from Vocabulary Over-Load, what about parents? In order to develop a thesis, I structured a research project to test parent vocabulary knowledge, specifically the knowledge of identifying standardized tests and test uses with IN a school setting. On a voluntary basis, usually at P.T.A. meetings, I asked parents to take the following quiz: (Overhead) 3.

I divided my parent group into four divisions in order to obtain as wide a sample as possible given my research capabilities. 4 (Overhead) Some of my friends in Mass., Conn., North Carolina, and New York helped me by testing their parents. Their results ARE included in this evaluation. They have my thanks for the extra special effort.

5.

Please take a look at the results. As you can see, parents are not handling the vocabulary overload. We use the technical vocabulary of standardized testing in conferences, presentations, and in written material. This special vocabulary is used at a very early point in a child's school years. The C.T.B.S. Test is used at my school and at the elementary school to identify academic success; we also rely heavily on it for class placement. If parents are not conversant with this important test at the elementary level, how may they be of assistance to their children in evaluating the year's progress? Students at my school take the S.A.T. in the seventh grade. We will have ninety or more who may take the test as part of the Duke Talent Search. If a child is to learn early about "test anxiety", how can a parent support a testing situation about which he may know very little. Let us also consider one other point here, do you believe that the results of this research confirm S that parent expectations are that "the counselor will do it"? Do you believe that we should be the only ones to teach this information? If so, when do we teach this special vocabulary? How will a seventh grader interpret his S.A.T. scores? Ninth graders at my school may take Biology as their science course. As

a junior high, our students go on to attend Lake Highland Prep, Trinity Prep, Winter Park High School, and Edgewater High School. The preparatory schools send 99% of their students on to college, and Winter Park High will send over 60% of its students on to a four-year college. Should my parents know what the Achievement Tests are and that it would be better if their son or daughter took the Biology Achievement Test at the end of the 9th grade year instead of trying to take it two years down the road as a junior in high school?

In the interest of time, let me share four other points that I learned which might be helpful to those of us who work in college admissions. Please consider them food for thought for I am presenting them in simplistic form.

(Overhead) 7.

(1) Details (Literal Level) are chained to form concepts (Interpretive level) which are chained together to form principles (Applied Level).

a. Literal Level.....Student recalls or recognizes information.

b. Interpretive Level.....Requires an inference on the part of the student.

c. Application Level.....Student integrates the information.

8. 9. - 10.

Keeping those principles in mind, let us review pages 14 and 15 of the NACAC booklet, High School Planning For College-Bound Athletes. If a student's reading skills have him functioning at the Literal Level, do you want him to take the information found on these two pages in the literal sense? From what past experiences will he build his decision making in order to function at the Interpretive Level and, then, at the Application Level? It a student didn't follow through, could this be a part of the lack of his understanding?

2. Now let us look briefly at the how and why of Vocabulary Reinforcement. If words must be used many times in different situations to become a part of a student's vocabulary, memorizing definitions is not enough. Writing words on the chalkboard and discussing them with the students is not enough. Students need to use the vocabulary words in conversation and in discussions. Words must be used many times. Please consider the vocabulary which is used in the college guide books. I simply took sample pages from Orchard House, Petersons, and Barrons. I did not select the college example for any reason other than to show the vocabulary which is used. 12- 13- 14

(Overhead)

3. Let's take that step of vocabulary reinforcement one step further:

(Overhead) 15

Had you thought how many times students are faced with words which have multiple meanings? Consider my school district and the word credit. (Overhead) 16 -17 -18

We even give more than one type of diploma. Here is a sample of two different diplomas and how they differ in requirements.These are only two examples, my students have two other sets of requirements with which they might need to be familiar.

4. Last concept. When we read, we link new ideas to past experiences. Let's now consider, Taking the S.A.T. which is puslished by the College Boards. I am using page 5 as the example here. 19, - 20,

Let me conclude my presentation by reviewing some reasons why I believe that we should begin to teach the technical vocabulary of college admissions in the elementary school years to both parents and students, and let me give you a few suggestions of how to incorporate this idea in a school setting.

(Overhead) Students first learn to read..... 21

(Overhead) Ways to Decrease..... 22

My school is in a high socio-economic area. If my parents and students are having a difficult time, perhaps students in other areas are having an even more difficult time. Do you know, do you really know how knowledgable your parents and students are when it comes to this technical vocabulary. If you take the time to check, I believe that you will be surprised by your results, and I believe you will be able to use your time more wisely as you speak to both parents and students about college admissions.

Contributors to the research project.....

(These peoples names and their schools are not to be identified without prior permission)

Dommerich Elementary School.....Maitland, Florida.....Charlotte Barolet

Maitland Junior High School.....Maitland, Florida.....Sally Shoemaker

Blue and Gold Team.....Winter Park, Florida.....Ramona Pietkiewicz

East Lyme Junior High.....East Lyme, Conn.....Thomas Combs

Mattituck High School.....Mattituck, N.Y.....Joyce Grattan

Charles E. Jordan High School.....Durham, N.C.....Nezzie Carter-Moore

Winter Park High School.....Winter Park, Florida..... Ruth Ford

High School Planning for College-Bound Athletes

Plan To Take The Standardized Tests

Many colleges and universities use the results of standardized tests as one of the factors in making admissions decisions. In some parts of the country, colleges prefer the SAT. In other areas, colleges prefer the ACT. Many colleges will accept either. You need to find out what test the colleges you are considering require and plan to take one or both.

We are giving you a brief description of each test and you can find more information and test registration forms in the counseling office.

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test): This is the preliminary version of the SAT. You normally take this test in October of your junior year. The test measures verbal and mathematical reasoning ability and scores are reported in each area. The results of the PSAT are used for the National Merit Scholarship program and the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students.

SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test): If the colleges you are considering require the SAT, you should plan to take this test in the spring of your junior year or in the fall of your senior year and you may take it more than once. The test measures verbal and math skills and includes a section on your knowledge of grammar and punctuation called the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE).

ACT (American College Test): If the colleges you are considering require the ACT, you should also plan to take this test in the spring of your junior year or in the fall of your senior year. You may take this test more than once, too.

The test measures your knowledge in four areas: English, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences. The scores are combined to produce a composite score.

ACH (Achievement Tests): Achievement tests are offered to test your knowledge in many different subject areas. Some (but not all) colleges require you to take one or more of these tests in your senior year. You should read the materials from the colleges you are considering to see if you should plan to take Achievements.

Foreign Language: Many colleges require entering students to have taken two years of a foreign language. Depending on how your schedule works, you can begin your study of language either your freshman or your sophomore year. If you like the language, keep taking it or consider studying another language. You will find that the study of language is excellent preparation for the discipline of college work and an exciting way to learn about other people and their cultures.

NAME

TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ: Please answer the following questions by indicating whether the statement is correct or incorrect:

QUESTION	(T)	(F)
1. Two years of foreign language is required in order to graduate from high school.	( )	( )
2. Personal fitness is a high school graduation requirement.	( )	( )
3. Band will meet the course requirements in the area of fine arts.	( )	( )
4. Life Management is the ninth grade equivalent of the wheel class.	( )	( )
5. Four years of mathematics is required for high school graduation.	( )	( )
6. An orchestra course will meet the practical arts requirement.	( )	( )
7. High school graduation requires that you take Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.	( )	( )
8. One semester's credit is worth one year of work.	( )	( )
9. Stanine scores are used to help determine grade and level placement for students.	( )	( )
10. The ninth grade year is considered the first step in your high school plan.	( )	( )

A HANDBOOK FOR USE WITH COMPONENT #20634

"READING IN CONTENT AREAS" (R I C A)

R I C A I

FOR ALL SUBJECT AREAS

Grades 7-12

JAMES L. SCHOTT, Superintendent
Orange County Public Schools
P.O. Box 271, Orlando, FL 32802

OCPS CONSULTANTS

Joy Monahan, Program Consultant
Secondary Reading

Mary Jane Sevick, RICA Teacher Trainer

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Directions: Please answer the following questions with a brief response. Do not put your name on this quiz, but please do identify the grade level(s) of your children.

Children's grade level _____

School in which you took this quiz: Elementary Jr. High High School

TESTING

1. Test Name

	Please identify the proper name of the following standardized tests.	What academic skills do they measure?
A. C.T.B.S.		
B. S.S.A.T.		
C. P.S.A.T.		
D. S.A.T.		
E. ACH.		
F. A.C.T.		

2. Define the word stanine.
3. Define the term standard scale score.
4. What is a percentile rank?
5. In your opinion, what are the most important uses of test results for the following people?

   Parents

   Counselors

   College Admissions Officers

PARENT SAMPLE

GROUP A ..... Elementary School Parents

GROUP B ..... Junior High School Parents

GROUP C ..... Senior High School Parents

GROUP D ..... Blue and Gold Parents

Parents who are working with the Naval Academy Support Team

PARENT QUIZ RESULTS

QUESTIONS	CTBS	SSAT	PSAT	SAT	ACH	ACT	STANINE	STANDARD SCALED SCORE	PERCENTILE RANK
CORRECT RESPONSES			50%	50%					50%
	31%	15%	65%	73%	19%	24%	26%	3%	73%
	29%	5%	58%	67%	22%	25%	20%	4%	75%
	25%	25%	88%	89%	40%	35%	18%	.02%	75%

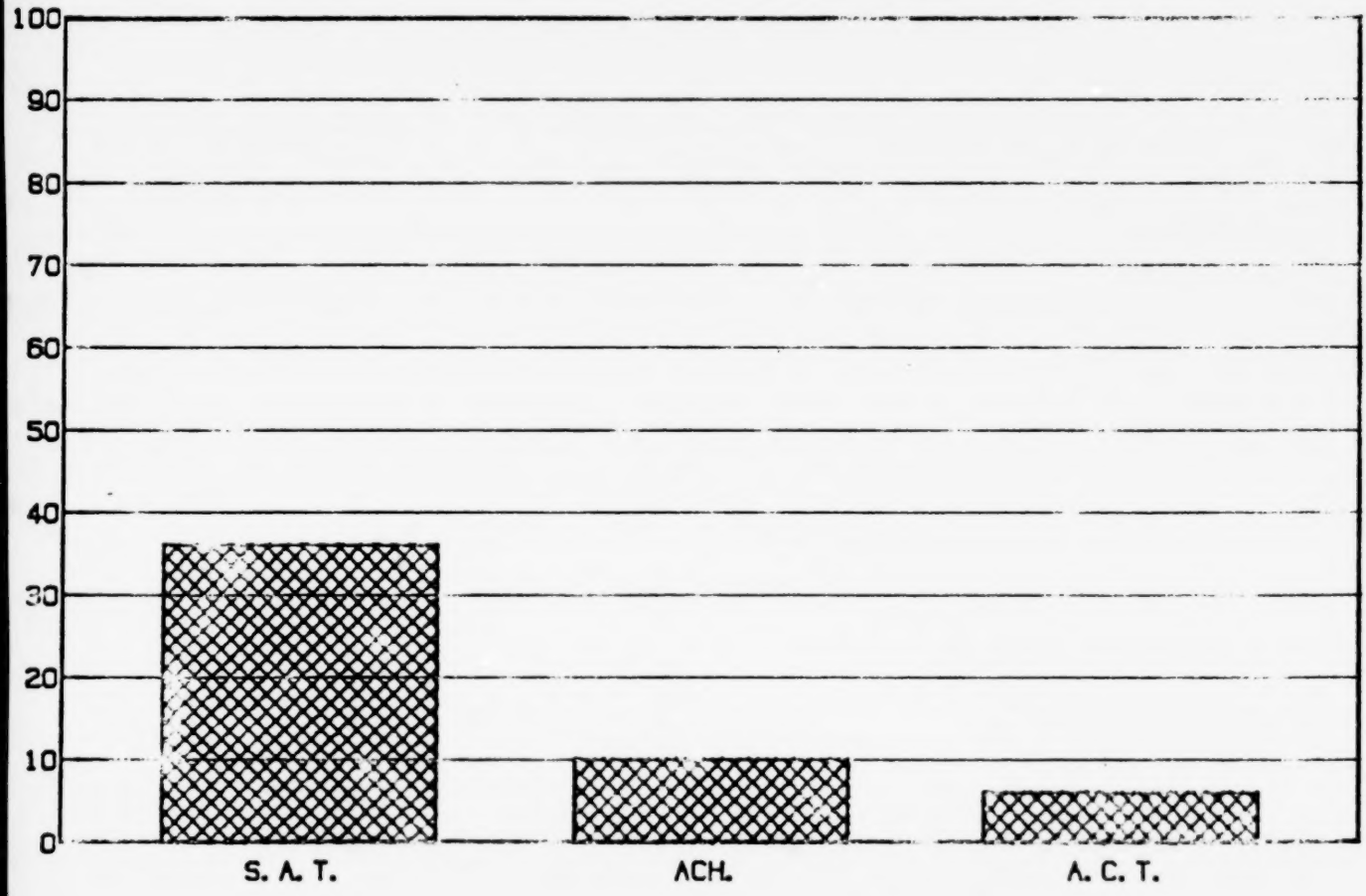
= *Elementary School*

= *Junior High*

= *Blue and Gold*

= *Senior High*

ABLE TO IDENTIFY WHAT THE TEST MEASURES



Parent Sample

All Parents who participated regardless of grade level

CLASS OF 1988 AND BEYOND

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

COURSES	CREDIT
Language Arts	4
Math	3
Science	3
Social Studies	
American Government	½
World History	1
American History	1
Economics	½
Life Management Skills	½
Personal Fitness	½
Fine Arts	½
Practical Arts/Vocational	½
Electives	10
TOTAL	25

Cumulative G.P.A. in all Courses 1.5
SSAT I
SSAT II

CLASS OF 1988 AND BEYOND

FLORIDA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS CERTIFICATE

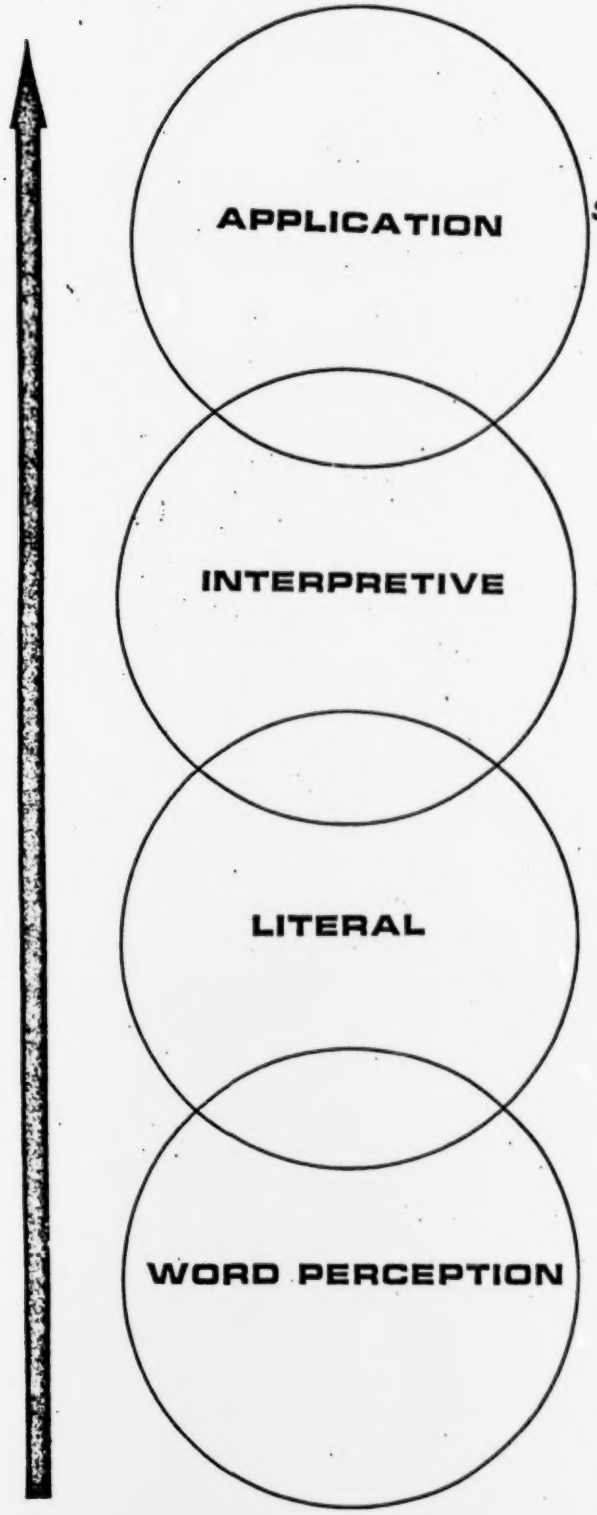
COURSES	CREDIT
Language Arts*	4
Math*	4
Science*	4
Social Studies*	3
Foreign Language*	2
Art and/ or Music*	1
Health and Physical Education	1
Electives	7
TOTAL	26

No grade below C
At least 3.0 GPA for all courses
SAT Score 1100 or ACT 26
SSAT I
SSAT II

*Specific courses only.
Ask your counselor.

LEVELS OF LEARNING

(READING)



EXTENSION OF WHAT WE READ

USING PAST EXPERIENCES

Student Integrates Information

"WHAT DID THE AUTHOR MEAN?"

GENERALIZATION BASED ON FACTS

Requires an Inference

"WHAT DID THE AUTHOR SAY?'

CAN BE FOUND AS A DIRECT STATEMENT

Student Recalls or Recognizes Information

RECOGNIZING AND PRONOUNCING WORDS OR SYMBOLS -- RELATING IT TO A REAL OBJECT OF EXPERIENCE

READING CONCEPT:

Details (LITERAL LEVEL) are chained to form concepts (INTERPRETIVE LEVEL))which are chained together to form principles (APPLIED LEVEL).

LITERAL LEVEL

Student recalls or recognizes information.

INTERPRETIVE LEVEL

Requires an inference by the student.

APPLICATION LEVEL

Student integrates the Information he has read.

EXAMPLE FOR CONSIDERATION:

Booklet, HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING FOR COLLEGE BOUND ATHLETES which is published by NACAC. Focus on pages 14/15.

High School Planning for College-Bound Athletes

National Association of College Admissions Counselors

PSAT You normally take this test in October of your junior year.

ACH Some (but not all) colleges require you to take one or more of these tests in your senior year.

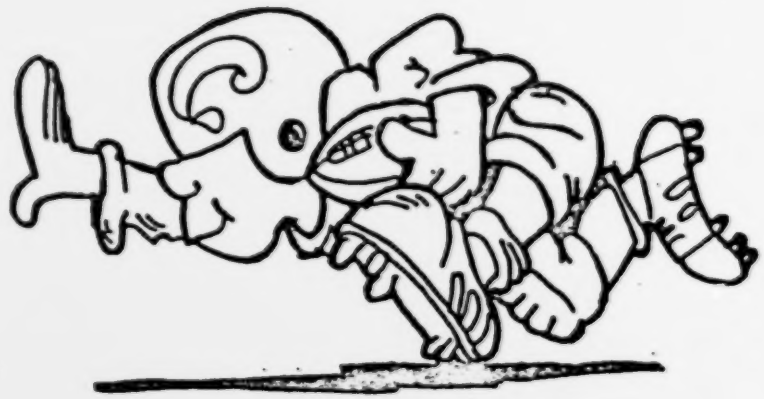
High School Planning for College-Bound Athletes

National Association of College Admissions Counselors

Foreign Language

Have taken two years.

Depending on how your schedule works, you can begin your study of language either your freshman or your sophomore year.



VOCABULARY REINFORCEMENT

(Should we teach the vocabulary of college admissions?)

If words must be used many times in different situations to become a part of a student's vocabulary, memorizing definitions is not enough.

Writing words on the chalkboard and discussing them with students is not enough.
Students and parents need to use the vocabulary words in conversation and discussions.

Examples: College Guides for Mills College, Duke University, Ohio Wesleyan University

MILLS COLLEGE Oakland, CA 94613

Freshman Admissions

Options: early entrance, early decision, deferred entrance. High School completion requirement: diploma or equivalency certificate. Requirements: essay, high school transcript, 2 recommendations, SAT or ACT, TOEFL (for foreign students) required; 3 years of high school math and science, 2 years of high school foreign language, interview, 3 Achievement Tests, English Composition Test (with essay) recommended. Test scores used for admission. Application deadlines: 2/1, 11/15 for early decision. Notification dates: 4/15, 12/15 for early decision. College's own assessment of entrance difficulty level: Moderately difficult.

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Office of Admissions
Ohio Wesleyan University
Delaware, Ohio 43015

Admission Requirements

The admission process is competitive, but each application is carefully studied, and applicants themselves have a voice in how their credentials are prioritized. Although the applicant's academic record is most important, followed closely by teacher and counselor evaluations, applicants then may rank other factors to be considered, such as evidence of creativity, community service, and leadership. SAT or ACT scores may be given less weight.

Duke University
Durham, North Carolina 27706
Telephone: 919 684-8111

ADMISSIONS

Requirements

Graduation from secondary school required.

No inflexible requirements, but at least 12 units must be in college-preparatory courses (chemistry or physics, 4 mathematics recommended for College of Engineering). SAT and three ACH, including English composition, required; mathematics ACH required for applicants to College of Engineering; ACT acceptable.

Interview not required. Campus visit recommended.

Admission may be deferred.

Application Fee: $35, not refundable.

READING CONCEPT:

The RICA course presented, among others, these two statistics:

FACT: 70% of the most frequently used common words have multiple meanings.

85% of the students must be given instruction in the "Technical Vocabulary" of a subject area to learn the concepts and meanings of the technical terms.

VOCABULARY OVERLOAD .....

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WORDS WITH MULTIPLE MEANINGS

Let's consider the simple word: **CREDIT**

1. Belief ... faith ... trust
2. Personal influence
3. Favorable reputation
4. An entry in a student record
5. Delayed payment
6. Money in a person's bank account
7. An acknowledgment of au horship
8. A listing of producers, directors, actors

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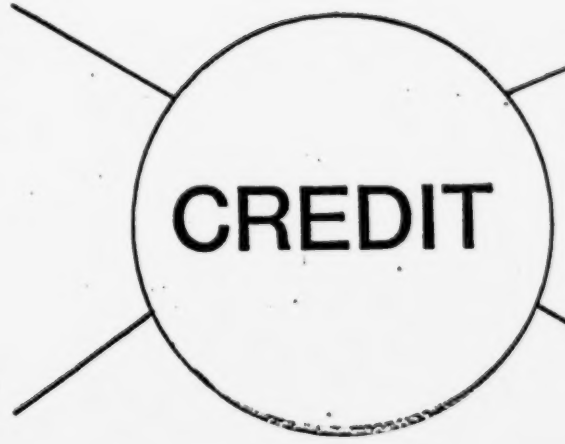
WORDS WITH MULTIPLE MEANINGS

Let us add four more meanings to the word credit (s) that might be used by students in a school setting.



The total number, as well as the specific courses, required for an Honors Diploma or a Regular Diploma

The number required to graduate from high school

Credits which are required for entry into a specific school program. For example: Biology instead of Earth Science for the I.B. Program (International Baccalaureate)

Those courses viewed as the "Core Curriculum" by colleges

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A.I.M.

Academy
Introduction
Mission

A.A.I.M.

Academic
Accelerated
Individualized
Model

S.A.T.

Scholastic
Aptitude
Test

S.S.A.T.

State
Student
Assessment
Test

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READING CONCEPT:

"Content material is often filled with abstract ideas that are so unrelated to students' experiences that learning is hindered." *

* Cheek, Earl H. and Martha Collins Cheek. Reading Instructions Through Content Teaching. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co. 1983.

EXAMPLE FOR CONSIDERATION:

TAKING THE SAT, published by the College Boards. Focus on page 5.

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THE TEST OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH (TSWE)

The TSWE is a multiple-choice test given at the same time as the SAT, but it has a different purpose. The TSWE is intended to be used to help the college you attend choose an English course appropriate for your ability.

HOW THE TESTS ARE ORGANIZED

The SAT and TSWE are included in the same test book.

Each test book is divided into six sections:

-- 2 SAT-verbal sections
-- 2 SAT-math sections
-- 1 TSWE section
-- 1 section of equating questions (Verbal, math, or TSWE)

Students first learn to read. They then read to learn.

Reading is a complex process.

Vocabulary Knowledge

1. The vocabulary used in the college admissions process is a Technical vocabulary which is not taught in a classroom setting.

Time-Management Skills

2. Knowledge of this special vocabulary would enable parents and students to make better decisions at an earlier point in the student's educational development. Decisions based on fact, not on emotion.

Emotional Security

3. Students would face less pressure and receive more parent support, if they knew the secific vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge would enable them to know what questions to ask and when to ask them.

Team Planning

Student...

Parent...

Counselor...

4. Parents and students would be able to shoulder more decision making responsibility and, perhaps, place less unrealistic expectations on counselors if they knew when and how to make a proper college plan. A plan that could be adjusted or adapted to meet the growth, the ups and downs, of their particular child.

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WAYS TO DECREASE VOCABULARY OVERLOAD
&
SUPPORT PARENTS/STUDENTS/COUNSELORS

1. IMPACT

   (Interdisciplinary Middle School Program
   for Advisement/Counseling/Teaming)

2. Counselor Instructional Plan
   For Counselors at all Levels

3. Parent Instructional Classes

4. Parent/Teacher Mini-Instructional
   Sessions
   How to Read CTBS Scores

5. Teacher/Classroom Mini-sessions
   Chemistry Teacher/Chemistry ACH. Test

6. Presentations to church youth groups

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